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SUBJECT: A CORDIAL, UNINTERESTING VISIT FOR OSCE CHAIRMAN;
KARIMOV AGAIN STATES USG INVOLVED IN ANDIJON

Classified By: AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Miguel Angel Moratinos, held cordial, but seemingly unexceptional meetings with Uzbek officials. The Uzbeks expressed satisfaction with the current OSCE mission, but criticized alleged OSCE double standards. Moratinos stressed the need for both sides to cooperate and work together, especially to reestablish the trust broken with the events in Andijon. President Karimov reportedly told Moratinos that he still believes the United States supported terrorist groups which instigated the 2005 Andijon violence. While this visit demonstrates the Uzbeks' willingness to have a dialogue with the OSCE, the lack of concrete progress points to Uzbekistan's continuing resistance to cooperate efficiently and across all dimensions. End summary.

¶2. (C) The Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, visited Tashkent on April 12-13. He met with President Karimov, Foreign Minister Norov, Speaker of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) Khalilov, NGOs, civil society groups and the OSCE Project Coordinator's Office (PCO). OSCE Ambassador Miroslav Jenca briefed local ambassadors April 13 on the results of the visit.

¶3. (C) Jenca said Moratinos left with a positive impression. He told the Uzbeks everyone understands that the OSCE needs reform, but he hoped the Uzbeks would make positive contributions to the discussion. Moratinos also acknowledged Uzbek criticism of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), but said such should be better communicated through closer cooperation with the OSCE to find a mutually acceptable solution to Uzbekistan's concerns. He added that ODIHR is ready to support Uzbekistan's election process.

Official Meetings

¶4. (C) Moratinos met with President Karimov on April 12 for two and a half hours. Jenca characterized the meeting as a true dialogue where each listened to the other and understood that both sides needed to move forward. This contrasted with his meeting with Foreign Minister Norov, who was not as willing to listen and discuss. The Chairman thanked Uzbekistan for its support in international efforts in Afghanistan. In his meetings with NGOs, specific human rights cases were not mentioned. The main focus was on how

the OSCE can support the remaining NGOs.

15. (C) In a later discussion over lunch April 18, Ambassador Jenca told a group of ambassadors that Moratinos' meeting with Karimov included some discussion of the May 2005 Andijon violence. Karimov, according to Jenca, told Moratinos that he believes foreign terrorist groups planned and instigated the events with support from the United States and other countries. (Comment: This statement is a deeply disappointing confirmation that Karimov--and, by extension, the government--still hides behind the absurd idea, most likely generated by his own security apparatus, that the United States is conspiring with terrorist organizations to overthrow his regime. End comment.)

Future PCO-Uzbek Cooperation

15. (C) The Uzbeks told Moratinos that the government had approved all 13 project proposals that the PCO submitted to the MFA in January. The officials said Uzbekistan is satisfied with the current PCO's structure, implying that new mandate negotiations are unnecessary. Moratinos responded that it is important that the PCO work in all three dimensions to achieve balance, and that the Uzbeks need to take concrete actions to make progress in its relationship with the OSCE. The Uzbeks criticized the OSCE for allegedly applying double standards. Officials noted that in some countries OSCE election monitors were not allowed inside voting stations. They added their canned phrase that one cannot apply the rest of the world's standards to Uzbekistan. The Chairman encouraged Parliament speaker Khalilov to take an active part in the OSCE's Parliamentary structure.

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Andijon and the EU

16. (C) Uzbek officials repeated the argument that Uzbekistan's position and views on Andijon have been ignored. The Chairman responded that the OSCE needs to ensure it has the right mechanisms to sustain a dialogue on such issues, but both sides need to make an effort. He said both sides should draw appropriate lessons and continue to work together against terrorism. Moratinos mentioned that as a result of the events in Andijon, a strong sense of mistrust has developed between Uzbekistan and many other OSCE states.

Comment

17. (C) While this visit appears to have been useful to keep open a dialogue with the Uzbeks, Jenca did not note anything groundbreaking. We already know the Uzbeks do not like ODIHR and they have criticized the OSCE's alleged double standards numerous times before. It is likely that the Uzbeks timed the approval of the local OSCE projects in order to bring something to the table in their meetings with Moratinos.

PURNELL